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SUBJECT: DUTCH PREPARE FOR CIVILIAN COMMAND OF URUZGAN PRT AND
EVENTUAL TROOP WITHDRAWAL

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Dutch civilian staff embedded in the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) and PRT was recently expanded to twelve officials in an effort to ensure civilian control over governance and development issues, and greater involvement in security matters. As of July 26, the senior Dutch civilian, or CivRep, is now co-commander of the TFU on security, governance and development, although the TFU Commander retains final authority on security issues. The Deputy CivRep, a new position, is co-commander of the PRT, but his successor will assume full command of the PRT in March ¶2009. The military has successfully integrated the civilian staff into all TFU and PRT operations, and the transition to civilian leadership of the PRT is consistent with the Netherlands' firm commitment to relinquish leadership of the ISAF mission in Uruzgan, withdraw all or most of its troops in 2010, and maintain a civilian staff in the province following the troop withdrawal. End summary.

Civilians Assume Co-Command, Prepare for Full PRT Command

¶2. (SBU) The Dutch Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) and PRT are steadily and deliberately making the transition from military to civilian leadership. On July 26, the civilian staff was enlarged from nine to twelve MFA officials, and they were placed in key positions in the TFU and PRT (1,700 Dutch troops in total). The senior Civilian Representative (CivRep), who is equivalent to a colonel in rank, leads a team of one Deputy CivRep, two political advisors, three development advisors, two tribal/cultural advisors, and three Dutch-Afghan development assistants/interpreters. The CivRep and Deputy CivRep now serve as co-commanders with the TFU Commander and PRT Commander.

¶3. (SBU) The TFU and PRT Commanders currently remain the final authority on military and civil-military coordination (CIMIC) operations, but the civilian staff has the lead on governance and development issues and ensures civilian input in security matters. The civilian staff report directly to the CivRep, not the TFU or PRT Commander. The final phase of the transition will be in March 2009, when a Dutch diplomat will replace the PRT Commander.

¶4. (SBU) The military commander and civilian staff have agreed on the following measures to facilitate increased civilian leadership and involvement in the PRT and TFU:

-- The Deputy CivRep chairs a bi-weekly civil-military meeting that

synchronizes the reconstruction and development activities of the Dutch PRT mission teams operating in the province (military staff); PRT functional specialists for civil infrastructure, rule of law, and business development (military reservists); Dutch development advisors (civilians); Australian Reconstruction Task Force (military); and USAID and State Department representatives.

-- The development advisors are involved in the planning of all military-led reconstruction (i.e. CIMIC) projects.

-- The CivRep and political advisors participate in all planning sessions on security operations, ANSF training and mentoring, and counter-narcotics efforts.

-- The civilian staff will receive their own armored vehicles to be able to conduct meetings in the provincial capital, without relying on TFU or PRT support. Currently, the civilian staff has to rely on military transport and adjust their activities to the schedule of the military.

-- The CivRep and Deputy CivRep share office space with the TFU Commander and the PRT commander respectively.

-- The CivRep and COM TFU jointly receive and brief visitors (e.g. politicians, journalists and NGOs) to underline the increasing civilian face of TFU.

Military Welcomes Civilian Leadership...

15. (SBU) The current influence of the civilian staff in TFU and PRT

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activities is significant and pervasive. For example, PRTOff observed that the civilians played a critical role in shaping the TFU's military response to recent security concerns in Chora and Tarin Kowt districts, and no decisions regarding the TFU's and PRT's involvement in Afghan National Police training are made without civilian input. The TFU and PRT Commanders remain convinced that Coalition forces have created sufficient security to allow for a greater focus on governance and development. Thus, civilian leadership of the PRT and civilian co-command of the TFU is the next logical step.

...And Plans to Withdraw by 2010

16. (SBU) The Dutch CivRep recently confirmed for PRTOff that the Netherlands will relinquish lead nation status and withdraw all or most of its troops from Uruzgan in 2010. The Dutch have already begun to make preparations for their troop withdrawal by replacing Dutch Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) with French, Australian, Hungarian, and possibly U.S. forces, although the Dutch will retain command and control. The Czech Republic and Slovakia also recently joined the TFU and PRT to relieve or augment Dutch forces assigned to CIMIC planning and base security. Although deliberations in The Hague are ongoing, the TFU Commander and CivRep expect that Dutch civilians will remain in Uruzgan after the troop withdrawal in 2010. Thus, greater civilian leadership and involvement in the TFU and PRT is consistent with Dutch planning for post-2010.

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